

Sustaining Academic Freedom:

Ilia State University and its Academic
Partnership with Germany

Programme

Day 1: July 7 | from 17:00

Day 2: July 8 | 09:00 – 15:00

Venue:

**College for Social Sciences and Humanities,
Essen**

Please note that prior registration is required.



Day 1 – Academic Freedom & Higher Education Policy

Tuesday, 7 July 2026 | Starting at 17:00

17:00 – 17:10 – Welcome & Introduction

Prof. Dr. Oliver Reisner (Jean Monnet Professor in European & Caucasian Studies at Ilia State University)

Elena Resch (University Alliance Ruhr, Director LO for Eastern Europe/Central Asia)

17:10 – 17:30 – Official Opening Remarks

Prof. Dr. Martin Paul, Rector, Ruhr University Bochum

Prof. Dr. Nino Daborjginidze, Rector, Ilia State University

17:30 – 17:50 – The Current Situation in Georgia

Prof. Dr. Giga Zedania, Director of the Center for Advanced Studies at Ilia State University

17:50 – 18:50 – Panel Discussion on Defending Academic Freedom: Georgia, Europe and Authoritarian Dynamics

Moderator: Dr. Nina Lemmens (Managing Director University Alliance Ruhr)

Panelists:

Prof. Dr. Karen Shire (Vice Rector for University Culture, Diversity and International Relations, University of Duisburg-Essen)

Prof. Dr. Kornelia Freitag (Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, Ruhr University Bochum)

Prof. Dr. Oliver Reisner (Jean Monnet Professor in European & Caucasian Studies at Ilia State University)

Zaal Anronikashvili, Research Fellow at the Center for Literary and Cultural Studies (Berlin) / Professor at Ilia State University

Dr. Olga Orlova (Editor-in-Chief academic community media platform T-invariant)

From 19:00 – Get Together & Reception

Networking reception and informal exchange

Day 2 – Concrete Measures & Academic Cooperation

Wednesday, 8 July 2026 | 09:00 – 15:00

09:00 – 09:15 – Introduction & Objectives for the Workshop Day

Prof. Dr. Oliver Reisner

Elena Resch

09:15 – 09:45 – Funding Opportunities for German-Georgian Academic Cooperation

Presentation

09:45 – 11:00 – Parallel Workshops

Workshop 1 – Humanities and Social Sciences

Workshop Lead: Prof. Dr. Giga Zedania, Director of the Center for Advanced Studies at Ilia State University

Workshop 2 – Exact and Natural Sciences

Workshop Lead: Prof. Dr. David Tarkhnishvili, Director of the Institute of Ecology at Ilia State University

11:00 – 11:15 – Coffee Break

11:15 – 13:00 – Parallel Workshops

Workshop 3 – Academic Support & Financial Support Programmes

Workshop Lead: Dr. Jörn Grünewald, DLR Projektträger | European and International Cooperation | Eastern Europe (excluding the EU)

Workshop 4 – Institutional Partnerships, Academic Freedom & International Visibility

Workshop Lead: Dr. Philipp Schmädeke (Chairman of the Academic Network Eastern Europe | Director of SCIENCE AT RISK Emergency Office)

13:00 – 14:00 – Lunch Break

14:00 – 15:00 – Final Plenary Session

Presentation of workshop outcomes and discussion of future cooperation initiatives